IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 by rewriting same to read as follows and cancel claims 3, 8, and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer.

--1. (Twice Amended) An audio signal processing method for performing a process for decoding supplied data, comprising the steps of:

detecting whether zero data continues for a predetermined period of time in said supplied data;

determining, when zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, that said supplied data are compressed audio data; and

performing a decoding operation on said supplied data,

wherein when zero data continuing for said predetermined period of time is not detected, it is determined that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data, and said decoding operation is performed.

--2. (Twice Amended) The audio signal processing method described in claim 1, wherein upon detection that zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, said decoding is performed by switching said supplied data to said decoding operation based on a sync signal of said supplied data.

--4. (Twice Amended) The audio signal processing method described in claim 1, wherein said supplied audio data are stored

for said predetermined period during which it is detected whether said zero data continue, and when it is determined that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data, the result of decoding said supplied audio data is output following the result of decoding said stored audio data.

--7. (Twice Amended) An audio signal processing apparatus comprising:

detection means for detecting whether zero data continue for a predetermined period of time in supplied data;

determining means for determining that said supplied data is compressed audio data when the result of detection by said detection means is that zero data continues for said predetermined period of time; and

decoding means for decoding said supplied data based on the result of said determination by said determining means,

wherein when said detection means detects that zero data continue for said predetermined period of time, said decoding means switches to said decoding based on a sync signal of said supplied data, and decodes said supplied data, and

wherein said determining means determines that said supplied data are non-compressed audio data when zero data are not detected continuously for said predetermined period of time.